

A Booklet about the Style of Life and the Manners of the Imperatores

Epitome De Caesaribus

**Sometimes Attributed to Sextus Aurelius Victor
[4th Century A.D.]**

[Describing the Period from B.C. 27 through 395 A.D.]

**Translated from Latin by Thomas M. Banchich
(Buffalo, 2018), 3rd edition**

***Canisius College Translated Texts, Number 1*
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This translation is available on many websites, such as Topostext, [here](#)
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The Latin text, *Sexti Aurelii Victoris Liber de Caesaribus*
(Leipzig, 1911) pp. 133-176, is available at Internet Archive, [here](#).

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Wikipedia:

[Aurelius Victor](#), about 320 to about 390.

Google:

[Aurelius Victor](#), Google web search.

Encyclopaedia Iranica:

[Aurelius Victor](#), by Marie Louise Chaumont.

[Aurelius Victor](#), Google search of *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

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Preface

Some twenty years ago, in the course of research on Eunapius of Sardis, two studies of Timothy Barnes drew me to the *Epitome de Caesaribus* [1] My belief that there then existed no published translation in any modern language convinced me that, should the opportunity arise, the production of such a translation, together with a commentary, would be a worthwhile project. [2] A 1988 summer research grant from Canisius College allowed me to complete a rough version based on the Teubner text of Franz Pichlmayr and Roland Gruendel. [3] Kristin Ennis, my student assistant checked my translation and supervised the collection of scholarship on the *Epitome* that was to figure in the projected commentary. But resumption of teaching duties and Ms. Ennis' graduation forced a suspension of work on both translation and commentary, and these factors, plus commitments to other research projects and administrative duties, made it impossible to devote any extended period of time to the *Epitome*. In light of this, I was happy to learn of Harry Bird's plan to do a translation of and commentary on the *Epitome* for the series *Translated Texts for Historians*, in which his volumes on Eutropius and Aurelius Victor have already appeared. [4]

My recent association with the electronic encyclopedia *De Imperatoribus Romanis* has sent me back to the *Epitome* in the belief that it might be worthwhile to make my translation, equipped with suitable links to *De Imperatoribus Romanis*, available in electronic form. These links, I thought, would give to those interested access to some of what would have been included in my commentary, while Professor Bird's forthcoming commentary would doubtless fill any remaining void. Michael DiMaio, of *De Imperatoribus Romanis*, agreed with my view and oversaw the creation of the necessary connections between encyclopedia and translation.

The translation as it stands now is a thorough revision of the draft completed in 1988. It retains the Teubner textual divisions and also includes in boldface type within boldface brackets -- [] -- the pagination of that edition. In addition, it reproduces in boldface the Teubner sigla for various textual difficulties: * for a suspected lacuna, † for a suspected corruption, and < > to enclose editorial additions. Greek works employed in the *Epitome* have been retained, followed by translations within plain brackets, as, for example, at *Epitome* 16.5: "a disorder which the Greeks call [apoplexy]." Likewise, plain brackets enclose translations of cognomina. A few Latin words -- deus, dominatio, dominus, imperator, imperium, paterfamilias, potestas, princeps, procurator, and rex -- have been left untranslated, most because, to my mind, they seemed to convey some important nuance too easily lost in translation. For those uninterested in nuance, their English meanings should appear evident. Proper names of individuals and peoples appear in their latinate form except in very few instances - for example, "Constantine" rather than "Constantinus" (which is retained for Constantine's father and for Constantine's son of the same name) and "Alans" rather than "Alani." "Valentinian" is the emperor from 364-375; "Valentinianus," his son, emperor from 375-392. My goal has not been to be consistent, but merely consistent enough. Because Professor Bird's work will contain a full bibliography, none is offered here.

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Notes

[1] "The *Epitome de Caesaribus* and Its Sources," Review of *Die Epitome de Caesaribus*, by Jörg Schlumberger, *Classical Philology* 71 (1976), pp. 258-268, and *The Sources of the Historia Augusta*, Collection Latomus 155 (Brussels: Universa, 1978).

[2] Only after completing the initial draft of my translation did I discover the French version of N. A. Dubois, prepared for the Aurelius Victor volume of the *Bibliothèque Latine-Française*, 2nd Series (Paris: C L. F. Panckouke, 1846).

[3] (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1970).

[4] (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993 [Eutropius] and 1994 [Aurelius Victor]).

A Booklet about the Style of Life and the Manners of the Imperatores

Epitome De Caesaribus

Abbreviated from the Books of Sextus Aurelius Victor

1

In the seven hundred and twenty-second year from the foundation of the city, but the four hundred and eightieth from the expulsion of the kings, the custom was resumed at Rome of absolute obedience to one man, with, instead of rex, the appellation imperator or the more venerable name Augustus. 2. Accordingly, Octavian, whose father was Octavius, a senator, and who was descended in his mother's line through the Julian family from Aeneas (but called Gaius Caesar, his grandmother's brother) was then given the cognomen Augustus on account of his victory. 3. Placed in control, he, per se, exercised tribunician potestas. 4. The region of Egypt, difficult to enter because of the inundation of the Nile and impassable because of swamps, he made into a form of province. 5. By the labor of soldiers, he opened canals, which through neglect had been clogged with the slime of ages, to make Egypt a bountiful supplier of the city's ration. 6. In his time, twenty million allotments of grain were imported annually from Egypt to the city. 7. He joined to the number of provinces for the Roman people the Cantabri and Aquitani, Raeti, Vindelici, Dalmatae. The Suevi and Chatti he destroyed, the Sigambri he transferred to Gallia. The Pannonii [134] he added as tributaries. The peoples of the Getae and Basternae, aroused to wars, he compelled to concord. 8. To him Persia sent hostages and granted the authority of creating kings. 9. To him the Indians, Scythians, Garamantes, and Aethiopians sent legations with gifts. 10. Indeed, he so detested disturbances, wars and dissensions that he never ordered a war against any race except for just reasons. And he used to say that to be of a boastful and most capricious mind through the ardor of a triumph and on account of a laurel crown -- that is barren, fruitless foliage -- plunged the security of citizens into danger by the uncertain outcomes of battles; 11. and that nothing whatever was more appropriate to a good imperator than temerity: whatever was being done properly, happened quickly enough; 12. and that arms must never be taken up except in the hope of a very significant benefit, lest, because of heavy loss for a trifling reward, the sought-after victory be like a golden hook for fishermen, the damage of which, through its having been broken off or lost, no gain of the catch is able to compensate. 13. In his time, a Roman army and tribunes and propraetor were destroyed beyond the Rhine. So much did he mourn what had transpired that, made unsightly by his dress, hair, and the remaining symbols of mourning, he struck his head with a powerful blow. 14. He used to censure an innovation of his uncle, too, who, calling the soldiers comrades in novel and charming fashion, while he affected to ingratiate himself, had weakened the auctoritas of the princeps. 15. Indeed, toward citizens he was most clemently disposed. 16. He appeared faithful toward his friends, the most eminent of whom were Maecenas on account of his taciturnity, Agrippa on account of his endurance and the self-effacedness of his labor. Moreover, he used to delight in Virgil. He was a rare one, indeed, for making friendships; most steadfast toward retaining them. 17. He was so devoted to liberal studies, especially to eloquence, that no day slipped by, not even on campaign, without him reading, writing, and declaiming. 18. He introduced laws, some new, others revised, [135] in his own name. 19. He added to and ornamented Rome with many structures, glorying in the remark: "I

found a city of bricks, I left her a city of marble." 20. He was gentle, pleasant, urbane, and of charming disposition, handsome in his entire physique, but with large eyes, rapidly moving the pupils of which, in the fashion of the brightest stars, he used to explain with a smile that men turned from his gaze as from the intense rays of the sun. When a certain soldier averted his eyes from his face and was asked by him why he so behaved, he answered: "Because I am unable to bear the lightning of your eyes."

21. For all that, so great a man did not lack vices. For he was somewhat impatient, a bit irascible, secretly envious, openly fatuous; furthermore, moreover, he was most desirous of holding dominion -- more than it is possible to imagine -- , an avid player at dice. 22. And though he was much at table or drink, to a certain degree, in fact, abstaining from sleep, he nevertheless used to gratify his lust to the extent of the dishonor of his public reputation. For he was accustomed to lie among twelve catamites and an equal number of girls. 23. Also, possessed by the love of the wife of another, when his wife Scribonia had been set aside, he joined Livia to himself as if with her husband's consent. Of this Livia there were already two sons, Tiberius and Drusus. 24. And while he was a servant of luxury, he was nevertheless a most severe castigator of the same vice, in the manner of men who are relentless in correcting the vices in which they themselves avidly indulge. For he damned to exile the poet Ovid, also called Naso, because he wrote for him the three booklets of the Art of Love. 25. And because he was of exuberant and cheerful spirit, he was amused by every type of spectacle, especially those with an unknown species and infinite number of wild animals.

26. When he had passed through seventy-seven years, he died at Nola of a disease. 27. Yet some write that he was killed by a deception of Livia, who, since she had gained information that Agrippa (the son of her stepdaughter, [136] whom, as a result of his mother-in-law's hatred, he had relegated to an island) was to be recalled, feared that, when he had obtained control of affairs, she would be punished. 28. Thereupon, the senate resolved that the dead or murdered man should be decorated with numerous and novel honors. For in addition to the title "Father of his Country," which it had proclaimed, it dedicated temples to him at Rome and throughout the most celebrated cities, with all proclaiming openly: "Would that he either had not been born or had not died!" 29. The first alternative said of a most base beginning, the second of a splendid outcome. For in pursuing the principate he was held an oppressor of liberty and in ruling he so loved the citizens that once, when a three-days' supply of grain was discerned in the storehouses, he would have chosen to die by poison if fleets from the provinces were not arriving in the interim. 30. When these fleets had arrived, the safety of the fatherland was attributed to his felicity. He ruled fifty-six years, twelve with Antony, but forty-six alone. 31. Certainly he never would have drawn the power of the state to himself or retained it so long if he had not possessed in abundance great gifts of nature and of conscious efforts.

2

Claudius Tiberius, son of Livia, stepson of Octavian Caesar, ruled twenty-three years. 2. Since he used to be called Claudius Tiberius Nero, he was, because of his drinking, aptly referred to in jests as Caldius Biberius Mero ["Imbiber of Hot, Straight Wine"]. 3. Before imperium was assumed, he was, under Augustus, sagacious enough and fortunate enough in war that not undeservedly was control of the state entrusted to him. 4. He possessed much knowledge of literature. He was quite renowned for eloquence, but in character most base, grim, greedy, insidious, pretending that he wished what he did not; he seemed hostile to those in whose counsel he was taking pleasure, but well-disposed to those whom he despised. 5. He was better in spur-of-the-moment responses and deliberations than in those planned in advance. 6. Indeed, he fictitiously rejected the principate offered him by the senators (which he certainly did with cunning), [137] darkly exploring what each was saying or thinking: an affair which brought ruin to each who was good. 7. For when men who reckoned that he was sincerely declining the immensity of the imperial burden expressed sentiments in favor of his choice in a long speech, they unexpectedly met their final fates. 8. With Archelaus, their king, removed, he restored Cappadocia to a province. He suppressed the banditries of the Gaetulii. Marobodus, King of the Suevi, he shrewdly encompassed. 9. While he punished with great fury innocent and guilty, members of his own family and outsiders alike, with the skills of the army enfeebled, Armenia was ravaged by the Parthians, Moesia by the Dacians, Pannonia by the Sarmatians, and Gallia by neighboring peoples. 10. After his eighty-eighth year and fourth month, he was murdered in an intrigue of Caligula.

3

Caligula ruled four years. 2. He was the son of Germanicus, and, since he had been born in the camp, was given a cognomen of a military footwear (that is, caligula). 3. Before his principate he was accepted by and dear to all, but in his principate he was such that it was commonly said with justification that there had never been a dominus more terrible than he. 4. In fact, he stained his own three sisters with defilement. 5. He went about in the dress of his personal gods; he used to claim that he was Jove on account of his incest, and Liber, moreover, from his bacchanalian chorus. 6. I am uncertain whether it will have been proper to write about this for posterity, except perhaps since it helps to know everything about the principes, so that the unfit at least may shun such enormities through fear of their reputation. 7. In his palace, he subjected noble matrons to public wantonness. 8. He first, crowned with a diadem, ordered himself to be called dominus. 9. In the space of the three miles which lies between the moles in the Puteolan Gulf, he arranged ships in a double line and in a two-horse chariot drove down a roadway firmed up by an accumulation of sand to approximate earth [138] as if celebrating a triumph, dressed in a golden military cloak, with a horse ornamented in trappings of office and a bronze crown. 10. He perished afterward, struck down by the soldiers.

4

Claudius Titus, son of Tiberius' brother Drusus, paternal uncle of Caligula, ruled fourteen years. 2. When the senate had thought that the family of the Caesars had been exterminated, he was discovered by the soldiers in a hiding place that ill became him, and, since he was simpleminded, he seemed quite harmless to those ignorant men and was made emperor. 3. He was obedient to his stomach, wine, vile lust; simpleminded and almost doltish; lazy and tremulous; subject to the dictates of his freedmen and wife. 4. In his time, Scribonius Camillus was created emperor in Dalmatia and killed forthwith. The Mauri set the provinces ablaze; a force of Musulamii was cut to pieces. The Claudian Aqueduct was opened at Rome. 5. Messalina, his wife, was from the first indulging indiscriminately in extramarital affairs as if it were her legal prerogative: as a result of what she did, many men who abstained through fear were killed. Then, more violently aroused, she had certain of the more noble wives and maidens put up for sale with herself in the fashion of prostitutes, and males were compelled to attend. But if someone ever bristled at such enormities, he was savaged by means of a contrived charge against himself and his entire family, so that he seemed to be more in the power of the ruling man rather than the ruling wife. 6. In the same way, his freedmen, having attained the highest power, were defiling everything with debaucheries, exile, murder, and proscriptions. 7. From among these men, he made Felix prefect of the legions in Judaea. After the Britannic triumph, to Posidonius the eunuch, [139] along with the bravest of the soldiers, he gave arms and medals for a gift, as if to one who had taken part in the victory. He allowed Polybius to walk between the consuls. Narcissus, the secretary, used to surpass them all, deporting himself as dominus of the Dominus himself; and Pallas was exalted by the praetorian insignia. They were so rich that, with him debating about the bankruptcy of the fisc, it was most humorously noised about in a famous elegy that there would be wealth in great profusion for him, if, by the two freedmen, he were admitted into a partnership. 9. In his times, the Phoenix was seen in Egypt, a bird which they say flies every five hundred years from Arabia to remembered locations; and in the Aegean Sea an island suddenly sank. 10. He married Agrippina, daughter of Germanicus, his own brother, who, procuring the empire for her own son, first killed her stepchildren in multiform intrigues, then, by poison, her husband himself. 11. He lived sixty-four years; his death was kept secret a long while, as once before in the case of Tarquinius Priscus. 12. While his attendants simulated grief, Nero, his stepson, obtained the rights of imperium.

5

Domitius Nero, scion of Domitius Ahenobarbus, his father, and Agrippina, his mother, ruled thirteen years. 2. For five years he seemed bearable, whence some have reported that Trajan was accustomed to say that the

principes as a group were far different than Nero -- for a five-year period. 3. In the city, he constructed an amphitheater and baths. 4. Pontus he reduced to the status of a province with the permission of King Polemo, from whom Pontus Polemoniacus is named, as likewise the Cottian Alps from the dead King Cottius. 5. For indeed he passed the remainder of his life shamelessly, so that it is embarrassing to commemorate any of this. He went so far that, sparing neither his own decency nor that of others, at last, veiled in the manner of a bride-to-be, [140] with dowry paid, with everyone crowding together in festive fashion, he was married in the presence of the senate. Covered with the skin of a wild animal, he used to forage the sexual organs of either sex with his face. He even contaminated with defilement his own mother, whom he afterward killed. After their husbands were slain, he married Octavia and the Sabina with the cognomen Poppaea. 6. Then Galba, proconsul of Hispania, and Gaius Julius usurped imperium. 7. When Nero learned that Galba approached and that the senate had resolved that, according to ancestral custom, when his neck had been thrust into a yoke, he was to be beaten to death with rods, he, completely deserted, left the city in the middle of the night with Phaon, Epaphroditus and Neophytus, and the eunuch Sporus, whom once, after he had been castrated, he had tried to transform into a woman; and he pierced himself with a blow of his sword, with the impure eunuch about whom we spoke aiding his trembling hand while, since no one had been found earlier by whom he might be struck, he soberly exclaimed: "So, do I have neither friend nor foe? I lived shamelessly, let me die shamefully." 8. He perished in the thirty-second year of his life. The Persians had been so delighted with him that they sent legations furnishing materials for constructing a monument. 9. Otherwise the provinces as a whole and all Rome exulted in his death to such a degree that the urban masses donned the caps of freedmen and celebrated manumission, as if they had been delivered from a savage dominus.

6

Galba, scion of the noble clan of the Sulpicii, ruled seven months and an equal number of days. 2. He was disreputable toward young men, intemperate with regard to eating, and arranged everything in a council of his three friends, that is, Vinius, Cornelius, and Icelius, to such a degree that they were just as much residents of the Palatine mansion and used to be referred to commonly as "the tutors." 3. Before dominatio was assumed, he administered many provinces with distinction, treating the soldiers most severely, so that, when he entered [141] the camps, the saying was quickly spread: "Learn to soldier, soldier; this is Galba, not Gaeticus." 4. When he was in the seventy-third year of his life, while he advanced in his armor to calm legions inflamed by the faction of Otho, he was killed near the Lake of Curtius.

7

Salvius Otho, sprung from distinguished ancestors from the town Ferentanum, ruled three months -- shameless in his entire life, in his youth most of all. 2. Defeated by Vitellius first at Placentium, then at Betriacum, he transfixed himself with a sword in the thirty-seventh year of his life -- so beloved to his own troops that, when his body was seen, a great many died by their own hands.

8

Vitellius, sprung from noble stock (his father, Lucius Vitellius, a consul) ruled eight months. 2. He was violent, cruel, and avaricious with profusion. 3. In his time, Vespasian seized the principate in Oriens; conquered by his soldiers in a battle held under the walls of the city, Vitellius, with his hands bound behind him, was led from the palace to which he had removed himself and was paraded as a show before the mob. 4. And lest this man, at all events shameless to the last of the evils which he had done, lower a blushing face, with a sword placed under his chin, half-nude, while many assaulted his face with filth and excrement and, in speech, with other dirt more shameful, he was dragged down the Gemonian Steps where he had ordered Sabinius, Vespasian's brother, to be killed. 5. Transfixed by many blows, he perished. He lived fifty-seven years. 6. All these men whom I have briefly touched upon, especially the family of the Caesars, possessed learning, culture, and eloquence to such a

degree that surely they would have covered their modest indiscretions, if they were not -- apart from Augustus -- excessive in all vices together.

9

Vespasian ruled ten years. 2. Among his good deeds, his disregard of animosities was singular [142] to the degree that he wed the daughter of his enemy Vitellius, who had been given a most lavish dowry, to a very eminent man. 3. He used to bear patiently the agitation of his friends, as he was very witty, responding to their jibes with jests. For he wittily softened Licinius Mucianus, with whom as an aide he had reached imperium, insolent by reason of his merits, saying, when another man, a common acquaintance, had been summoned, this alone: "I know that I am a man." 4. But why is this a surprise with respect to his friends, since he even made light of the oblique pronouncements of advocates and the contumacy of philosophers? 5. Briefly put, he restored the orb of the earth, long faint and feeble. For, first of all, unless they had conducted themselves far too violently, he preferred to mollify followers of the tyrant rather than to destroy them after they had been tortured, having reckoned most prudently that nefarious works are carried out by the majority of the men through fear. 6. Moreover, by laws most equitable and by instruction, and what is stronger, by the example of his own life, he had abolished the majority of vices. 7. He was, nevertheless, weak, as some people wrongly think, with regard to money, since it is sufficiently agreed that through a shortage in the treasury and through the ruin of the cities he had sought new (nor afterward continued) payments of taxes. 8. If owners were lacking, he repaired, by means of resources granted to those willing, a Rome disfigured by fires and by aged ruins, the Capitol, the Temple of Peace, the monuments of the Claudii, and erected many new structures. 9. Through all lands, as is Roman custom, cities were renovated with surprising care; roads were fortified with the greatest labors. 10. Then the hills along the Flaminian Way were cut through for easy passage -- what is commonly called the "Punctured Peak." 11. A thousand clans were composed, since he had with great difficulty found two hundred, the majority having been exterminated by the savageness of the tyrants. 12. By fear alone, Volgeses, King of Parthia, was compelled to peace. 13. The Syria for which Palestina is the name, [143] and Cilicia, and Trachia and Commagene, which today we call Augustophratensis, were added to the provinces. Judaea, too, was added. 14. When friends warned him to beware of Mettius Pomposianus, about whom a rumor had been spread that he would rule, he made him a consul, joking in the following cavil: "When will there ever be a memory of a gift so great?" 15. Indeed, he maintained a uniform mode of life during his whole reign. He stayed awake at night and, when public affairs were finished, he admitted his intimates, putting on his shoes and royal vesture while being saluted. Then, after whatever business that had come up was heard, he exercised with a ride, then rested; finally, when he had washed, he, in a quite convivial frame of mind, used to attend dinner. 16. Affection compels one to say more about a good imperator, whom, after fifty-six years from Augustus' death, the Roman state, bled by the savageness of the tyrants, chanced upon, as if by some divine destiny, lest it go completely to ruin. 17. And so, passing the sixty-ninth year of his life, he died, mingling with serious matters the jests in which he always took pleasure. 18. Indeed, first, when a comet had appeared, he said, "That concerns the King of Persia" (whose hair is rather long). Then, exhausted by an exudation of the bowels, he rose up and said, "It becomes an imperator to depart the earth standing."

10

Titus, called also by his father's name Vespasian, the offspring of a freedwoman mother named Domitilla, ruled two years, two months, and twenty days. 2. Most earnestly devoted from boyhood to the admirable pursuits of probity, soldiery, and letters, he displayed gifts of mind and body in whatever he attempted. 3. When he accepted the care of the fatherland, it is incredible how much he surpassed the man whom he was replacing, especially in clemency, liberality, honor, and contempt of wealth, things which were quite dear to him because, as a result of some things done while he was yet a private citizen, he was believed to have been a particularly passionate lover of luxury [144] and of vice. 4. For, during his father's rule, he obtained the praetorian prefecture and, by means of agents who, spreading insidious things through the theaters and camps, demanded punishment, he oppressed as if convicted of a crime whoever was suspect or opposed to him. Among them, he ordered Caecena, a consular,

who had been summoned to dinner and who had scarcely yet left his place at the table, to be slaughtered on account of suspicion of the debauched Bernice, his own wife. 5. Moreover, under his father, verdicts in legal disputes were put up for sale * him desirous of plunder, from which all in general, envisioning and invoking Nero, gravely accepted that he had reached the height of affairs. 6. But these things, having been turned to the better, brought him immortal glory to such a degree that he was called "Treasure" and "Lover of the Human Race." 7. Then, as he submitted to regal constancy, he ordered Bernice, spurning her marriage with him, to return home, and the flocks of the effeminate to depart -- an act by which he offered, as it were, a sign of intemperance altered. Henceforth, while successors were accustomed to confirm awards and concessions from earlier principes, once he took control by means of an edict he spontaneously decreed such things for those who possessed them. 9. Also, on a certain day, recollecting in the evening that he had not awarded anything to anyone, he said in a laudable and lofty remark, "Friends, we have wasted a day" (because he was of great liberality). 10. Indeed, he carried clemency to the point that he first admonished two men of most distinguished rank because they had conspired against him and were unable to deny that a crime had been contemplated, and afterward he ordered the men, who had been led to the arena, to sit on either side of him, and, when a sword of the mirmillons whose combats were being viewed was intentionally requested, as if for the purpose of examining its edge, he gave it to one and then to the other; to those men, shocked and awed at his courage, he said, "Do you not see that powers are bestowed by Fate, [145] and that action prompted by the hope of gaining or fear of losing them is expended in vain?" 11. In tears he often supplicated his brother Domitian, too, who was hatching plots and agitating friends among the soldiers, not to desire to attain by parricide what by his own volition was going to fall to him and what, since he was a co-holder of potestas, he now possessed. 12. In his time, Mount Vesuvius in Campania began to flame, and at Rome there was a fire for three days and three nights without an evening's respite. 13. Pestilence, too, there was, as much as scarcely ever before. 14. These evils, nevertheless, he relieved with no one being burdened, by means of all sorts of remedies, now renewing the sick through his very own person, now consoling the afflicted with the deaths of his own family members. 15. He lived forty-one years and died among the Sabines, on the same estate as his father. 16. His death was scarcely able to be believed, so much lamentation excited the city and provinces that, calling him a "Public Treasure," as we have said, they mourned the orb of the earth as if it had been deprived of a perpetual guardian.

11

Domitian, son of Vespasian and Domitilla, the freedwoman, brother of Titus, ruled fifteen years. 2. At first, he feigned clemency nor did he seem at this point too inactive at home or in war; on which account he conquered the Chatti and Germans. 3. Law he pronounced most equitably. At Rome he constructed many buildings, whether already begun or from the foundations. 4. With exemplars sought from everywhere, especially Alexandria, he restored libraries consumed by fire. 5. He was so skilled at archery that his arrows flew between the spread fingers of the extended hand of a man positioned far away. 6. Then, cruel as a result of killings, he began to conduct executions of good men and, in the fashion of C. Caligula, forced himself to be called dominus and deus; and slothful, he, with everything laughingly set aside, used to pursue swarms of flies. 7. He was mad with lust, the foul exercise of which, in the language of the Greeks, he used to call ["bed-wrestling"]. 8. Hence, to someone inquiring [146] if anyone was in the palace, the response: "Not even a fly." 9. Inflamed by these depravities of his and most of all by an injury of words, as a result of which he used to suffer to be called a male prostitute, Antonius, supervisor of Germania Superior, seized imperium. 10. With him brought low in battle through Norbanus Lappius, Domitian, more abominable by far toward the entire family of mankind, even toward his own family members, began raging in the fashion of wild animals. 11. Therefore, in fear of his cruelty and of their own conscience, many formed a plot, with the head chamberlain Parthenius and Stephanus the instigators, and then Clodianus, who expected punishment on account of fraud involving intercepted funds, with Domitia, the tyrant's wife, who dreaded torture by the princeps on account of her love of the actor Paris, also were received into the plot. 12. They pierced Domitian with many wounds after the forty-fifth year of his life. 13. And the senate decreed that his funeral be carried out in the fashion of a gladiator and that his name must be obliterated. 14. In his time, the Secular Games were celebrated.

15. Until this time, men born in Rome or through Italy controlled imperium; henceforth foreigners. For this reason, it is ascertainable that the city Rome has been increased by the virtue of outsiders. For what was the quite

12

Cocceius Nerva, born at the town Narnia, ruled sixteen months, ten days. 2. When he had accepted imperium and a rumor quickly arose that Domitian lived and would soon be at hand, he was sufficiently terrified so that, pale and unable to speak, he barely held firm. But, bolstered by assurances received from Parthenius, he was turned to festive blandishments. 3. When he had been joyfully received by the senate in the senate house, , alone from all Arrius Antoninus - a shrewd man and a very close friend of his -, wisely describing the lot of rulers, [147] embraced him and said that he congratulated the senate, people, and provinces, however, in no way Nerva himself, for whom to escape ever-evil principes had been better than, enduring the force of so great a burden, subjections not only to troubles and risks, but also to the assessment of enemies and, equally, of friends, who, since they presume they deserve everything, are bitterer than even enemies themselves, if they do not obtain something. 4. He exempted whatever had previously accrued to the taxes (called the "burdens"); he relieved afflicted cities; girls and boys born to indigent parents he ordered fed at public expense through the towns of Italy. 5. Lest he be alarmed by the approach of the malevolent, he was admonished in the following fashion in a comment of Junius Mauricus, a steadfast man: invited to a social gathering, when he had observed that Veiento, who had, indeed, enjoyed consular honor under Domitian, yet who had persecuted many with secret accusations, was present, when among the conversations mention was made of Catullus, a principle calumniator, and Nerva was saying, "What would he be doing now, if he had survived Domitian?", Mauricus said, "He would be dining with us." He was a most learned man and a frequent arbitrator of disputes. 6. Calpurnius Crassus, who was tempting the minds of the troops with grand promises, having been discovered and having confessed, he removed, along with his wife, to Tarentum, while the senate chided his leniency. 7. And when Domitian's murderers were being called to execution, he was so consternated that he was unable to keep from vomiting or from a paroxysm of the bowels, but nevertheless he vehemently objected, saying that it was more fitting to die than to befoul the authority of imperium as a result of the authors of the power that he was to acquire having been betrayed. 8. But the soldiers, with the princeps ignored, slaughtered those they sought, Petronius with a single blow, but Parthenius after his genitals had been torn out and shoved into his mouth †, with Casperius bought off by means of huge payoffs, who, more insolent than the savage crime, compelled Nerva to give thanks among the people to the soldiers, since they had killed the most base and wicked of all [148] mortals. 9. He admitted Trajan to the position of son and to a share of imperium; with him he lived three months. 10. It was he who, with his voice rising in anger as he shouted out very many things against someone by the name Regulus, was seized by a sweat. 11. When it abated, the excessive shivering of his body revealed the beginnings of a fever, nor much later did he end his life in his sixty-third year of age. 12. His body, as formerly that of Augustus, was conveyed with honor by the senate and buried in the tomb of Augustus. On the day on which he died, there was an eclipse of the sun.

13

Ulpius Trajan, from the city Tudertina, called Ulpius from his grandfather, Trajan from Traius, the founder of his paternal line, or named thus from his father Trajan, ruled twenty years. 2. He showed himself to be the sort of man of state that the awestruck abilities of consummate writers have scarcely and with difficulty been able to express. 3. He accepted imperium at Agrippina, the noble colony in Gallia, possessing diligence in military matters, mildness in civil, and largess in supporting citizens. 4. And since there are two things expected of egregious principes -- integrity at home, bravery in arms, and prudence in both -- so great was the quantity of what is best in him that, as if in some due proportion, he seemed to have combined the virtues, except that he was somewhat given to food and drink. 5. He was liberal toward friends and, as much as befit his style of life, thoroughly enjoyed associations. 6. He established baths in honor of Sura, with whose zeal he had secured imperium. 7. With regard to this, he appeared over and above what was necessary to wish to dedicate everything in his name, when it was enough to have said that he improved or repaired. 8. He was certainly tolerant of labor, a devotee of whatever was best and [149] warlike. He highly esteemed very straightforward characters or men

most erudite, although he himself was of slight theoretical knowledge and moderately eloquent. 9. But of justice and human and divine law he was as much a deviser of the new as a guardian of the traditional. 10. All of these things were viewed the greater, because, with the Roman state destroyed and prostrated through many and fearsome tyrants, a divinity was thought to have been opportunely bestowed toward the remedy of evils so great to the extent that quite numerous and wondrous things proclaimed his coming. Among these, the main cornice proclaimed in Attic speech from the pediment of the Capitol: ["It will be well"]. 11. The ashes of his cremated body were borne back to Rome and interred in the Forum of Trajan under his column, and an image was placed above it, just as triumphators are accustomed to do, entering the city, with the senate preceding and the army. 12. At that time, more destructively by far than under Nerva, the Tiber flooded with great devastation of close-by buildings; and there occurred a serious earthquake through many provinces and a dreadful plague and famines and fires. 13. To all these things Trajan brought relief through remedies usually excellent, decreeing that the height of houses not exceed sixty feet on account of proneness to collapse and deadly expenses if ever things such as this should come to pass. 14. From this he was deservedly called "Father of his Country." He lived sixty-four years.

14

Aelius Hadrian, a scion of Itala, born to Aelius Adrianus, a cousin of princeps Trajan, who came from Adria, the town in the Picenum area which also gave the name to the Adriatic Sea, ruled twenty-two years. 2. He was quite considerably learned in literature and was called by many "Greekling." He devoured the pursuits and customs of the Athenians, having mastered not merely rhetoric, but other disciplines, too, the science of singing, of playing the harp, and of medicine, a musician, geometrician, painter, [150] and a sculptor from bronze or marble who approximated Polycletus and Euphranoras. Indeed, like those things in a way, he, too, was refined, so that human affairs hardly ever seem to have experienced anything finer. 3. With a power of memory beyond that which is believable for anyone, he was able to review by their names places, affairs, troops, and even those absent. 4. He was of immense industry, inasmuch as he made a circuit of all the provinces on foot, outstripping the accompanying retinue, while he revived all towns and increased the orders. 5. For indeed, on the example of the military legions, he had mustered into cohorts workmen, stone-masons, architects, and, of men for the building and beautifying of walls, every sort. 6. He was diverse, manifold, and multiform; as if a born arbiter with respect to vices and virtues, by some artifice he controlled intellectual impulse. He adroitly concealed a mind envious, melancholy, hedonistic, and excessive with respect to his own ostentation; he simulated restraint, affability, clemency, and conversely disguised the ardor for fame with which he burned. 7. With respect to questioning and likewise to answering in earnest, in jest, or in invective, he was very skillful; he returned verse to verse, speech to the speaker, so you might actually believe that he had given advance thought to everything. 8. His wife, Sabina, while she was nearly being incapacitated by servile affronts, was driven to a voluntary death. She used to say openly that, because she had judged his character inhuman, she had taken pains lest, to the bane of the human race, she become pregnant by him. 9. Overcome by a subcutaneous disease which he had long endured placidly, burning and impatient with pain, he destroyed many from the senate. 10. Since peace was procured from many kings by means of tributes, he used to say that he had obtained more by leisure than others had by arms. 11. Certainly he organized the public and palatine offices, though not those of the military, in the [151] form which, with a few things changed by Constantine, persists today. 12. He lived sixty-two years; then he was consumed by a miserable death, weakened by the torment of nearly all his limbs to such a degree that, beseeching his most faithful ministers, he frequently averred that he must be killed and, lest he vent his madness on himself, that a guard of those dearest to him be maintained.

15

The Antonius called Fulvius or Boionius, afterward also given the cognomen Pius, ruled twenty-three years. 2. Adopted as a son by Hadrian, whose son-in-law he had been, he was of such great goodness in the principate that he doubtless lived without a model, although his own age will have compared him to Numa, since by his authority alone, with no war, he ruled the orb of the earth for twenty-three years, with all legions, nations, and

peoples together fearing and loving him so much that they regarded him as a parent or patron more than a dominus or emperor, and all, wishing in the fashion of the propitious heavenly ones judgment about controversies among themselves, called upon him. 4. Indeed, even Indians, Bactrians, and Hyrcanians sent legations when the justness of so great an emperor became known, a justness which he adorned with a serious, handsome countenance, long of limb, suitably robust. 5. Before he emerged to be saluted, he partook of a little bread, lest, with his strength consumed as a result of the blood around his heart being cold, he be interrupted and too little meet the needs of the business of state, which he used to pursue with, to outward appearance, the unbelievable diligence of the best paterfamilias. 6. He lacked an appetite for glory and ostentation, and was so mild that he commented to the senate, which was pursuing men who had plotted against him, that men desirous of evil must not be [152] investigated in his actual presence, lest, if many should be discovered, the extent to which he was in odium become apparent. 7. Accordingly, it was at Lorii, his country-estate, twelve thousand paces from the city, that he was consumed by a fever a few days after twenty-three years of imperium. 8. In his honor were decreed temples, priests, and countless other things. 9. Moreover, he was so gentle that when, through suspicion of a shortage of grain, he was being pelted with stones by the Roman commons, after the supply had been exposed to view, he preferred to placate rather than punish the sedition.

16

Marcus Aurelius Antonius ruled eighteen years. 2. He showed himself to be of all virtues and of celestial character, and was thrust before public calamities like a defender. For indeed, if he had not been born to those times, surely, as if with one fall, all of the Roman state would have collapsed. 3. Since there was never rest from arms, and wars were raging through all Oriens, Illyricum, Italy, and Gallia, and there were earthquakes not without the destruction of cities, inundations of rivers, numerous plagues, species of locusts which infested fields, there is almost nothing by which mortals are accustomed to be vexed with the most serious difficulties that is able to be described which did not rage while he was ruling. 4. I believe that it has been bestowed by divine providence that, when the law of the universe or nature produces † or something else unknown to men, they are appeased by the counsels of honest men as by the remedies of medicine. 5. With a new kind of benevolence, he admitted his own kinsmen, Lucius Annius Verus, to a share of imperium. This is the Verus who, while journeying between Altinum and Concordia, died, in the eleventh year of imperium, as a result of a surge of blood, a disorder which the Greeks call [apoplexy]. 6. He was a poet, mostly of tragedies, studious, of a rugged and lascivious character. [153] 7. After his demise, Marcus Antoninus controlled the state alone. From the beginning of his life, he was extremely placid, so much so that from infancy he changed his expression neither from joy nor sorrow. Of philosophy and Greek literature he was a student [most expert]. 8. He allowed more illustrious men and his ministers alike to host banquets in the same splendor as did he himself. 9. When, with the treasury exhausted, he did not have the funds which he applied to the soldiers and did not wish to inflict anything on the provincials or senate, he removed by a confiscation made in the Forum of Trajan material of regal splendor, golden vases, crystalline and murrine goblets, and his own wife's silken and golden apparel, numerous ornaments of gems, and through two continuous months an auction was held and much gold was collected. 10. After a victory, however, he refunded the purchase prices to buyers who wished to return what had been bought. 11. In his time, Cassius, seizing a tyranny, was killed. 12. He himself was consumed by disease at Bendobona in the fifty-ninth year of his life. 13. When the announcement about his death reached Rome, with the city convulsed with public lamentation, the senate gathered in the senate house, wrapped in mourning garb, weeping. 14. And what is scarcely believable about Romulus, all in common consent presumed that Marcus had been received into heaven. In his honor temples, columns, and many other things were decreed.

17

Aurelius Commodus, son of Antoninus, and himself called Antoninus, ruled thirteen years. 2. What he was going to become, in the very beginning, he revealed. For when [154] he was being advised by his father in his will not to allow the barbarians, who were now exhausted, to regain strength, he had responded that, although negotiations could be completed over a period of time by a live man, nothing could be completed by a dead

man. 3. He was quite fierce with sexual desire and greed, with cruelty, faithful to no one, and more savage toward those whom he had exalted with most splendid honors and enormous gifts. 4. So depraved was he that he often battled with gladiatorial weapons in the amphitheater. 5. Nevertheless, Marcia, of freedman stock, prevailed on this man by her beauty and meretricious arts, and, when she had thoroughly gained control of his mind, offered a drink of poison to him when he was emerging from the bath. Finally, his throat crushed by a very strong wrestling instructor who had been let loose on him, he expired in the thirty-second year of his life.

18

Helvius Pertinax ruled eighty-five days. Compelled to imperium, he drew "Resister and Submitter" as a sort of cognomen. 2. Having risen from a humble origin, he advanced to the urban prefecture, was made emperor, and, by the viciousness of Julianus, was cut down with many wounds at the age of sixty-seven. His head was carried about the entire city. 3. By this death, there perished a man who is an example of human vicissitude, who, through all types of labor, reached the heights, to such a degree that he was called the "Pillar of Fortune." 4. For he was the product of a freedman father among the Ligurians on a humble estate of Lollius Getianus, in whose prefecture it was most happily fated that he become a client, and he became a teacher of the letters which are taught by grammarians. He was more pleasing than beneficial, hence men called him by the Greek name ["Smooth-talk"]. 5. Never was he drawn to vengeance by injuries he had received. He was a lover of simplicity, he presented himself as a common man by means of his speech, his dining, and his demeanor. 6. To him [155] in death was decreed the name "Divine;" for his praise, there was acclaimed with repeated ovations until voices failed: "With Pertinax in control, we lived secure, we feared no one. To a dutiful father! To the father of the senate! To the father of all good men!"

19

Didius Julianus, by birth of Mediolanum, ruled seven months. He was a man of the nobility, very skilled in law, factious, reckless, eager to rule. 2. At this time, near Antioch, Niger Pescennius and, at Sabaria in Pannonia, Septimius Severus were made Augusti. 3. By this Severus, Julianus was led to the secret baths of the palace and, with his neck stretched out in the fashion of the condemned, was decapitated and his head placed on the rostra.

20

Septimius Severus ruled eighteen years. 2. He eliminated Pescennius, a man of utter baseness. Under him Albinus, too, who in Gallia had made himself Caesar, was slain near Lugdunum. 3. Severus left as successors his own sons, Bassianus and Geta. 4. In Britannia he extended a wall over a distance of thirty-two thousand paces, from sea to sea. 5. Of all the men who had lived before him, he was the most warlike. He was relentless in character, persevering to the end toward everything to which he had turned his attention. To whom he was well disposed, he exhibited a goodwill singular and abiding. He was thrifty when it came to his needs, lavish in largess. 6. Toward friends and enemies he was equally passionate, inasmuch as he enriched Lateranus, Cilo, Anullinus, Bassus, and several others -- and with buildings worthy of note, particular examples of which we see which are called the "House of the Parthians" and the "House of Lateranus." 7. To no one, in his reign, did he permit offices to be sold. 8. He was sufficiently educated in Latin literature, erudite in the Greek language, more at ease with Punic eloquence, [156] inasmuch as he was born near Leptis in the province Africa. 9. When he was unable to endure the pain of all his limbs, especially of his feet, in place of a drug, which was being denied him, he too avidly fell upon a meal large and of very much meat; since he was unable to digest this, he was overcome by the indisposition and breathed his last. 10. He lived sixty-five years.

21

Aurelius Antonius Bassianus Caracalla, Severus' son, was born at Lugdunum and ruled alone six years. 2. He was called by the name Bassianus from his maternal grandfather. But since he had brought very many garments from Gallia and had made ankle-length tunics and forced the urban population to enter dressed in such clothing for the purpose of saluting him, he was from this garment given the cognomen Caracalla. 3. His own brother Geta he destroyed, on account of which he was punished with madness by the railing of the Dirae, who, not without merit, are called Furies. From this madness he later recovered. 4. After he viewed the body of Alexander of Macedon, he ordered himself to be called "the Great" and "Alexander," having been drawn by the intrigues of flatterers to the point that, with fierce expression and neck turned toward his left shoulder (which he had noted in Alexander's face), he reached the point of conviction and persuaded himself that he was of very similar countenance. 5. He could not control sexual desire, for in fact he married his own stepmother. 6. While making a trip to Carrhae, near Edessa, he retired to nature's obligations and was killed by a soldier who was following him as if for the purpose of attendance. 7. He lived almost thirty years. His body was brought back to Rome.

22

Macrinus, with his son Diadumenus, were made imperatores by the army, ruled fourteen months, and were cut down by the same army, because Macrinus began to check military luxury and increased pay.

23

[157] Aurelius Antonius Varius, also called Heliogabalus, son of Caracalla from a cousin, Soemea, who had been secretly defiled, ruled two years and eight months. 2. The grandfather of his mother Soemea, Bassianus by name, had been a priest of Sol, whom the Phoenicians where he was living used to call Heliogabalus, whence the infamous Heliogabalus was named. 3. When he had come to Rome in the accompaniment of an enormous number of soldiers and the expectation of the senate, he contaminated himself by means of every lewdness. He turned toward himself a desire for debauchery which, through a defect of nature, he had not been able to attain, and ordered that he be called by the feminine name Bassiana, instead of Bassianus. A vestal virgin, as if in marriage, he joined to himself, and, after self-emasculatation, he dedicated himself to the Great Mother. 4. He made Marcellus, his own cousin, who afterward was called Alexander, Caesar. 5. He himself was killed in a military insurrection. 6. His body was dragged through the streets of the city in the fashion of the corpse of a dog, to the accompanying soldierly jesting of people calling him a puppy-bitch of unrestrained and crazed lust. Finally, since the narrow opening of a sewer would hardly accommodate the body, it was dragged all the way to the Tiber and, after a weight was attached lest it ever rise again, was tossed into the River. 7. He lived sixteen years and from what had transpired was called Tiberinus ["the Tiberine"] and Tractitius ["the Dragged"].

24

Severus Alexander ruled thirteen years. Good for the state, he was wretched for [himself]. 2. Under his rule, Taurinius, who had been made Augustus, on account of fear, threw himself into the Euphrates. 3. Then Maximinus, too, [158] when many from the army had been corrupted, took the rule. 4. Alexander, in fact, since he had seen that he had been deserted by his attendants, exclaiming that his mother had been the cause of his death, covered his head and, in the twenty-sixth year of his life, offered to an approaching assassin a neck stoutly tensed. His mother, Mamaea, so constrained her son that those very morsels, if they survived a meal or lunch, would be served again, although [half-eaten, at another] banquet.

25

Julius Maximinus Thrax, from the soldiery, ruled three years. 2. While hunting down the wealthy, guiltless and guilty alike, near Aquileia, by an insurrection of the troops, he was butchered with his child, a daughter, to the accompanying military jest that a whelp from inferior stock must not be kept.

26

In this man's reign, two Gordians, father and son, seized the principate and were destroyed one after another. 2. In the same course, too, Pupienus and Balbinus seized power and were eliminated.

27

Gordian, a grandson of Gordian from a daughter, was born at Rome to a most illustrious father, and ruled six years. 2. Near Ctesiphon, when the troops were incited to insurrection by Philip, the praetorian prefect, he was killed in the twenty-first year of his life. 3. His body, placed near the borders of the Roman and Persian empire, gave to the spot the name "Gordian's Sepulchre."

28

Marcus Julius Philip ruled five years. 2. At Verona he was killed by the army, the middle of his head cut through above his teeth. 3. Moreover, his son Gaius Julius Saturninus, whom he had made a partner in his power, was killed at Rome, entering the twelfth year of his life, of so harsh and dour a character that from as early as the age of five by precisely no contrivance of anyone was he able to be reduced to laughing; and, during the Secular Games, [159] although still of tender age, his face averted, he made note of his father too wantonly roaring with laughter. 4. He (Philip) rose from humble station, from a father who was a most noble commander of brigands.

29

Decius, from Pannonia Inferior, was born at Bubalia, and ruled thirty months. 2. He made Decius, his son, Caesar. He was a man learned in all the arts and virtues, quiet and courteous at home, in arms most ready. 3. On foreign soil, among disordered troops, he was drowned in the waters of a swamp, so that his corpse could not be found. His son, in fact, was killed in the war. 4. He lived fifty years. 5. In this man's time, Valens Lucinianus was made emperor.

30

Vibius Gallus, with Volusianus, his son, ruled two years. 2. In their time, Hostilianus Perperna was made emperor by the senate and, not much later, was consumed by the plague.

31

Under these men, Aemilianus, too, in Moesia was made emperor, against whom both advanced and near Interamna were murdered by their own army (the father in about the forty-seventh year of his life), having been

born on the island Meninx, which is now called Girba. 2. But Aemilianus, in his fourth month, was defeated near Spolegium or a bridge which is said to have taken its name from his destruction of the Sanguinarii, between Oriculum and Narnia, positioned in the middle of the area between Spolegium and the city Rome. He was, moreover, a Moor by race, warlike yet not reckless. 3. He lived fifty less three years.

32

Licinius Valerianus, Colobius ["Undershirt"] by cognomen, ruled fifteen years. Sprung from parents most distinguished, he was nevertheless stupid and extremely indolent, [160] unfit by mind or deeds for any holding of public office. 2. His own son Gallienus he made Augustus, and Gallienus' son, Cornelius Valerianus, Caesar. 3. During their rule, Regillianus in Moesia and, when Gallienus' son was killed, Cassius Latienus Postumus in Gallia, were made imperatores. 4. In the same way, Aelianus at Mogontiacum, in Egypt Aemilianus, at Macedon Valens, and, in Mediolanum, Aureolus seized control. 5. But, indeed, Valerianus, waging war in Mesopotamia, was defeated by Sapor, King of the Persians, immediately captured, too, and among the Persians grew old in ignoble servitude. 6. For he lived a long while, and the king of the same province was accustomed, with him bent low, to place his foot on his shoulders and mount his horse.

33

Gallienus, in fact, substituted another son, Salonianus, in place of his own son Cornelius, eager for the separate love of Salonina, his wife, and of a concubine -- Pipa by name -- , whom, when a portion of Pannonia Superior had been conceded through a treaty by her father, king of the Marcomanni, he had accepted in a kind of marriage. 2. Finally, he advanced against Aureolus. When, near some bridge, which is called "Aureolus" from his name, that had been seized and destroyed, he besieged Mediolanum, he was killed by his men in imitation of this same "Aureolus." 3. He ruled fifteen years, seven with his father, eight alone. He lived fifty years.

34

Claudius ruled one year, nine months. 2. Many think this man was fathered by Gordian, when, as a youth, he was being prepared by a grown woman for a wife. This Claudius was designated imperator by the decision of the dying Gallienus, to whom, stationed at Ticinum, he had, through Gallonius Basilius, directed the imperial regalia, and, when Aureolus had been killed by his own men, [161] by means of the legions regained, he fought against the people of the Alamanni not far from Lake Benacus and vanquished so great a multitude that scarcely half will have survived. 3. In these days, Victorinus took the rule. Indeed, when Claudius had learned from the Sibylline Books, which he had ordered to be inspected, that there was no remedy for the death of the man who stated his position first in the senate - although Pomponius Bassus, who then was the first man, offered himself - , he did not allow the responses to be ineffectual and gave his own life to the state for a gift, having proclaimed that none but the imperator held the first place of so great an order. 4. Inasmuch as this act was beneficial to all, the leading men dedicated to him not only the name "Divinity" but a statue of gold near the effigy of Jupiter itself and, in the senate-house, a gold image. 5. His brother Quintillus succeeded him. He held power a few days and was killed.

35

Aurelian, sprung from a common father - one even, as some say, a tenant farmer of Aurelius, a very distinguished senator, between Dacia and Macedonia - , ruled five years, six months. 2. That man was not unlike Alexander the Great or Caesar the Dictator; for in the space of three years he retook the Roman world from invaders, while Alexander in thirteen years, through immense victories, reached to India, and Gaius Caesar, in a

ten-year period, subjugated the Gauls and, for four years, contended against citizens. In Italy, that man was victor in three battles: at Placentia, beside the Metaurus River and the Altar of Fortuna, and, finally, at the Ticenensian Fields. 3. In his time, among the Dalmatians, Septimius was made emperor and immediately killed by his own men. 4. At this time, in the city Rome, the masters of the mint rebelled, who, having been conquered, Aurelian [162] repressed with the utmost cruelty. 5. That man first introduced among the Romans a diadem for the head, and he used gems and gold on every item of clothing to a degree almost unknown to Roman custom. 6. He fortified the city with stronger, more solid walls. For the populace, he instituted a ration of pork. 7. He appointed Tetricus, who had been made emperor by the army in Gallia, Regulator of Lucania, twitting the man with the choice jest that to rule over some portion of Italy must be regarded more loftily than to reign beyond the Alps. 8. Finally, by the treachery of his own servant - who gave to certain military men, friends of that very servant, names with notations (he deceitfully imitated his [Aurelian's] handwriting), as though Aurelian were preparing to kill them - he was murdered at the halfway point in the road which is between Constantinople and Heracleum. 9. He was savage, bloodthirsty, and ferocious at every moment -- even the murderer of his sister's son. 10. At the time, for seven months, there proceeded a kind of interregnum.

36

After him, Tacitus took power, a man of singular character, who died at Tarsus from a fever in the two hundredth day of his reign. 2. Florian succeeded him. But when the majority of the troops chose Equitius Probus, a man experienced in military affairs, Florian, on the sixtieth day of his reign, as if exhausted in the contest for power, when he had cut open his veins, was consumed by loss of blood.

37

Probus, sprung from a rustic father, fond of the fields -- Dalmatius by name --, ruled six years. 2. He defeated Saturninus in Oriens, and Proclus and, at Agrippina, Bonosus, who had been made imperatores. 3. He allowed the Gauls and Pannonians to have vineyards. By the labor of the soldiery, he planted vineyards on Mount Alma near Sirmium and on Mount Areum in Moesia Superior. 4. At Sirmium, in the "Iron Tower," he was killed.

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38

Carus, born at Narbo, ruled two years. 2. He immediately made Carinus and Numerian Caesars. 3. He died near Ctesiphon by the blow of a lightning bolt. 4. Numerian, too, his son, while he was being carried in a litter (he had contracted a disorder of the eyes), was murdered in a plot, with Aper, who was his father-in-law, the instigator. 5. While his death was being hidden by a deception until such time as Aper was able to take power, the crime was revealed by the stench of the corpse. 6. Then Sabinus Julianus took power and, at the Verronesian Fields, was killed by Carinus. 7. This Carinus defiled himself with all crimes. He killed many innocent men for made-up offenses. He corrupted the marriages of nobles. He was ruinous toward his fellow pupils, too, who, with jeering voice, teased him in the classroom. 8. He was tortured to death chiefly by the hand of his tribune, whose wife he was said to have violated.

39

Diocletian, a Dalmatian, freedman of the senator Anulinus, was, until he assumed power, called in their language Diocles, from his mother and likewise from a city named Dioclea; when he took control of the Roman world, in the fashion of the Romans, he converted the Greek name. He ruled twenty-five years. 2. He made Maximian an Augustus; Constantius and Galerius Maximianus, with the cognomen Armentarius ["Herdsman"], he created

Caesars, giving to Constantius, when his prior wife was divorced, Theodora, the stepdaughter of Herculus Maximian. 3. At this time, Charausius in Gallia, Achilles in Egypt, and Julianus in Italy were made imperatores and, by diverse death, perished. 4. Of these, Julianus, when an attack breached his walls, threw himself into a fire.

5. Diocletian actually relinquished the imperial fasces of his own accord at Nicomedia and grew old on his private estates. [164] 6. It was he who, when solicited by Herculus and Galerius for the purpose of resuming control, responded in this way, as though avoiding some kind of plague: "If you could see at Salona the cabbages raised by our hands, you surely would never judge that a temptation." 7. He lived sixty-eight years, out of which he passed almost nine in a common condition. He was consumed, as was sufficiently clear, by voluntary death as a result of fear. Inasmuch as when, called by Constantine and Licinius to the celebrations of a wedding which he was by no means well enough to attend, he had excused himself, after threatening replies were received in which it was being proclaimed that he had favored Maxentius and was favoring Maximian, he, regarding assassination as dishonorable, is said to have drunk poison.

40

In these days, the Caesars Constantius, the father of Constantine, and Armentarius were proclaimed Augusti, with Severus in Italy and, in Oriens, Maximinus, the son of Galerius' sister, created Caesars; and at the same time Constantine was made a Caesar. 2. Maxentius was made emperor in a villa six miles outside the city, on the road to Lavicanum, next Licinius became an Augustus, and, in the same fashion, Alexander at Carthagina; and likewise Valens was created emperor. Their demise was as follows:

3. Severus Caesar was killed by Herculus Maximian in Rome at Tres Tabernae and his ashes were interred in the sepulchre of Gallienus, which is nine miles from the city on the Appian Way. 4. Galerius Maximianus, when his genitals were consumed, died. 5. Maximian Herculus, besieged by Constantine at Massilia, then captured, was executed in a fashion most base, with his neck snapped by a noose. 6. Alexander was slaughtered by Constantine's army. 7. Maxentius, while engaged against Constantine, hastening to enter from the side a bridge of boats constructed a little above the Milvian Bridge, was plunged into the depth when his horse slipped; his body, swallowed up by the weight of his armor, [165] was barely recovered. 8. Maximinus died a simple death at Tarsus. 9. Valens was punished with death by Licinius.

10. As for characters, moreover, they were of this sort: Aurelius Maximian, with the cognomen Herculus, was fierce by nature, burning with lust, stolid in his counsels, of rustic and Pannonian stock. For even now, not far from Sirmium, there is a spot prominent because of a palace constructed there, where his parents once worked wage-earning jobs. 11. He died at the age of sixty, emperor for twenty years. 12. From Eutropia, a Syrian woman, he sired Maxentius and Fausta, the wife of Constantine, to whose father Constantius had given his stepdaughter, Theodora. 13. But Maxentius, they say, was substituted by the womanly wile of one laboring to control a husband's affection by means of an auspice of a most felicitous fecundity which commenced with a boy. 14. Maxentius was dear to no one at all, not even to his father or father-in-law, Galerius. 15. Galerius, moreover, although possessed of an uncultivated and rustic justice, was praiseworthy enough, physically attractive, a skilled and fortunate warrior, sprung from country parents, a keeper of cattle, whence for him the cognomen Armentarius ["Herdsmen"]. 16. He was born and also buried in Dacia Ripensis, a place which he had called Romulianum from the name of his mother, Romula. 17. He insolently dared to affirm that, in the fashion of Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, his mother had conceived him after she had been embraced by a serpent. 18. Galerius Maximinus, scion of Armentarius' sister, called by the name Dacia, to be sure, before imperium, was a Caesar for four years, then an Augustus in Oriens for three -- in birth, indeed, and in station a shepherd, yet a supporter of every very learned man and of literature, quiet by nature, too fond of wine. 19. Drunk with which, with his mind corrupted, he used to command certain harsh measures; but when he repented what had been done, in a continent and sober time, what he had enjoined, he ordered deferred. 20. Alexander was a Phrygian in origin, inferior in the face of hardship through the fault of old age.

With all these men out of the way, the rights of imperium fell to Constantine and Licinius. 2. Constantine, son of emperor Constantius and Helena, ruled thirty years. While a young man being held as a hostage by Galerius in the city of Rome on the pretence of his religion, he took flight and, for the purpose of frustrating his pursuers, wherever his journey had brought him, he destroyed the public transports, and reached his father in Britain; and by chance, in those very days in the same place, ultimate destiny was pressing on his parent, Constantius. 3. With him dead, as all who were present -- but especially Crocus, King of the Alamanni, who had accompanied Constantius for the sake of support -- were urging him on, he took imperium. 4. To Licinius, who was summoned to Mediolanum, he wed his own sister Constantia; and his own son, Crispus by name, born by Minervina, a concubine, and likewise Constantinus, born in those same days at the city Arlate, and Licinianus, son of Licinius, about twenty months old, he made Caesars. 5. But, indeed, as imperia preserve concord with difficulty, a rift arose between Licinius and Constantine; and first, near Cibalae, beside a lake named Hiulca, when Constantine burst into Licinius' camps by night, Licinius sought escape and, by a swift flight, reached Byzantium. 6. There Martinianus, Master of Offices, he made a Caesar. 7. Then Constantine, stronger in battle in Bithynia, pledged through the wife to confer regal garb upon Licinius, his safety having been guaranteed. Then, after he had been sent to Thessalonica, a little later he ordered him and Martinianus slaughtered. 8. Licinius died after about fourteen years of dominatio, and near the sixtieth year of his life: through a love of avarice he was the worst of all men and not a stranger to sexual debauchery, harsh indeed, immoderately impatient, hostile toward literature, which, as a result of his boundless [167] ignorance, he used to call a poison and a public pestilence, especially forensic endeavor. 9. Obviously he was sufficiently salutary to farmers and country folk, because he had sprung from and had been raised from that group, and a most strict guardian of the military according to the institutes of our forefathers. 10. He was a vehement suppressor of all eunuchs and courtiers, calling them worms and vermin of the palace. 11. But Constantine, when mastery of the entire Roman empire had been obtained through the wondrous good fortune of his wars, with his wife, Fausta, inciting him, so men think, ordered his son Crispus put to death. 12. Then, when his mother, Helena, as a result of excessive grief for her grandson, chastised him, he killed his own wife, Fausta, who was thrown into hot baths. 13. He was, to be sure, too desirous of praise, as is able to be ascertained. On account of the legends inscribed on many structures, he was accustomed to call Trajan "Wall Plant." He built a bridge over the Danube. 14. The royal garb he adorned with gems, and his head, at all times, with a diadem. Nevertheless, he was most agreeable in many matters: by means of laws most severe he checked malicious prosecutions; he nurtured the fine arts, especially studies of literature; he himself read, wrote, reflected, and listened to legations and the complaints of the provinces. 15. And when, with his children and his brother's son, Delmatius, confirmed as Caesars, he had lived sixty-three years, half of which thus, so that thirteen he alone ruled, he was consumed by disease. 16. He was a mocker rather than a flatterer. From this he was called after Trachala in the folktale, for ten years a most excellent man, for the following twelve a brigand, for the last ten, on account of his unrestrained prodigality, a ward irresponsible for his own actions. 17. His body was buried in Byzantium, called Constantinople. 18. With him dead, Delmatius was put to death by the violence of the troops.

19. Thus dominatio of the Roman world was returned to three men, Constantinus, Constantius, and Constans, the sons [168] of Constantine. 20. These individually held these areas as their realms: Constantinus the Younger, everything beyond the Alps; Constantius, from the Strait of the Propontis, Asia, and Oriens; Constans, Illyricum and Italy and Africa; Delmatius, Thrace and Macedonia and Achaëa; Hannibalianus, brother of Delmatius Caesar, Armenia and neighboring, allied nations.

21. However, on account of the legal right to Italy and Africa, Constantinus and Constans immediately disagreed. When Constantinus, reckless and horribly intoxicated, in a display of highway robbery, rushed into territories not his own, he was slain and thrown into a river, the name for which is Alsa, not far from Aquileia. 22. But while Constans, because of a desire of hunting, was roaming through forests and woodland pastures, some soldiers, with Chrestius, Marcellinus, and also Magnentius the instigators, conspired toward his murder. As soon as the day of carrying out the business was resolved, Marcellinus, feigning the birth of a son, invited many men to dinner. And so, late in the night, while a drinking party was being celebrated, he withdrew as if to relieve

himself as is normal, and assumed the revered attire. 23. When this action was discovered, Constans attempted to flee to Helena, a city close to the Pyrenees, and by Gaiso, who had been dispatched with picked men, he was killed in the thirteenth year of his reign as an Augustus (for he had been a Caesar for a three-year period), at the age of twenty-seven. 24. Disabled in the feet and hands through a malady of the joints, he was fortunate in temperateness of climate, in an abundance of harvests, and in no terror from barbarians, things which would have been still greater indeed, if he had promoted governorsof provinces not for a price, but on the basis of judgment. 25. When his death became known, Vetricio, Master of Soldiers, seized imperium in Pannonia at Mursia; not many days after, Constantius desposed him from power, granting to him not only a long life, but also a retirement full of pleasures. He was, moreover, a most simpleminded man, verging on stupidity.

[169]

42

Constantius proclaimed Caesar Gallus, the son of his father's brother, marrying to him his sister, Constantia. 2. Magnentius, too, made Decentius, his brother, Caesar beyond the Alps. 3. In these days, at Rome, Nepotianus, son of Eutropia, Constantine's sister, with those who had been destroyed driving him on, took the name Augustus; him Magnentius crushed in twenty-eight days. 4. At this time, Constantius did battle with Magnentius at Mursa and was victorious. In this battle, hardly anywhere was Roman might more fully consumed and the fortune of the whole empire dashed. 5. Then, when Magnentius had removed himself toward Italy, near Ticinum he scattered many who were recklessly and, as is customary in victory, too boldly pursuing him. 6. Not much later, cornered near Lugdunum, he breathed his last in the forty-second month of imperium and in about the fiftieth year of his life, his side pierced with a sword secretly supplied, assisting the blow by pushing against a wall -- as he was of immense size -- , spewing blood from the wound, his nostrils, and mouth. 7. He sprang from barbarian parents, who inhabited Gallia; he was inclined toward the study of reading, sharp of tongue, of a haughty spirit, and cowardly beyond measure; a master, nevertheless, for concealing terror under a pretext of boldness. 8. When his death was heard of, Decentius ended his life with a noose made of a cloth swathe. 9. At this time, Gallus Caesar was killed by Constantius. He ruled four years. 10. Silvanus was made imperator and, on the twenty-eighth day of imperium, was destroyed. He was by nature most charming. 11. Although the scion of a barbarian father, he was nevertheless, as a result of Roman training, sufficiently cultivated and patient.

12. Constantius took to himself with the rank of Caesar Claudius Julian, Gallus' brother, almost twenty-three years old. 13. In the Argentoratensian Fields in Gallia, he, with a few troops, destroyed an innumerable army of enemies. 14. The [170] heaps were standing like mountains, the blood was flowing in the fashion of rivers; a king, noble Nodomarius, was captured; the entire aristocracy was routed; the frontier of Roman property was restored; and afterward, doing battle with the Alamanni, he captured their most powerful king, Badomarius. 15. He was proclaimed Augustus by the Gallic troops. 16. Through legations, Constantius urged him to return to his original status and title. Julian, in a rather mild, secret correspondence, replied that he would serve far more dutifully under the title of a lofty imperium. 17. As a result of these things, Constantius burned more and more with outrage and, as he was unable to endure the like, with a sharp fever which excessive indignation increased by sleepless nights, perished in the foothills of Mount Taurus near Mopsocrene in the forty-fourth year of age and in the thirty-ninth of imperium, but in his twenty-fourth as an Augustus: eight alone, sixteen with his brothers and Magnentius, fifteen as a Caesar. 18. He was lucky in civil wars, lamentable in foreign; an amazing artist with arrows, very abstinent from food, drink, and sleep, able to endure labor, a lover of eloquence, which, since, through slowness of mind, he was unable to attain, he used to envy in others. 19. He was addicted to the love of eunuchs, courtiers, and wives, by whom - satisfied by no deviant or unlawful pleasure - he used to be polluted. 20. But from wives, many whom he obtained, he especially delighted in Eusebia, who was indeed elegant, but, through Adamantiae and Gorgoniae and other dangerous abettors, harmful of her husband's reputation, contrary to what is customary for more upright females whose precepts often aid their husbands. 21. For, as I pass over others, it is incredible to relate how much Pompeia Plotina increased the glory of Trajan: when his procuratores were disrupting the provinces with false accusations to the extent that one of them was said to have greeted a certain wealthy fellow thus, "How did you get so much?"; another, "Where did you get so much?"; a third, "Give me what you've got," she admonished her husband and, [171] reproaching him because

he was so unconcerned with his reputation, returned so much that afterward he spurned unjust exactions and called the fisc the spleen, because, as it increased, the remaining muscles and limbs dwindled.

43

Then Julian, the care of the Roman world having been returned to one man, himself, excessively desirous of glory, marched toward Persia. 2. There, led by a certain deserter into an ambush, when the Parthians were pressing upon him from different directions, he rushed from a just-established camp with a hastily snatched shield. 3. And when, with unthinking ardor, he attempted to order the ranks for battle, he was struck with a pike by a single man, from the enemy and, in fact, in flight. 4. And borne back to his tent and having emerged once again to encourage his men, gradually drained of blood, he died at just about midnight, having said beforehand, when consulted about imperium, that he recommended no one, lest, as is customary in a multitude with discrepant inclinations, † he produce danger for a friend from envy and for the state as a result of the discord of the army. 5. There had been in him immense knowledge of literature and of affairs, he had equaled the philosophers and the wisest of the Greeks. 6. He was very disposed toward exercise of the body, in which he was strong indeed, but he was short. 7. A disregard of due measure in certain matters diminished these things. His desire of praise was excessive; his worship of the gods superstitious; he was more daring than befits an imperator, by whom personal safety always must be maintained for the security of all, in war most of all. 8. The desire of glory had so violently overwhelmed him that neither by the movement of the earth nor by very numerous presages through which he was being forbidden to attack Persia was he led to put an end to his ardor, and not even a massive sphere observed by night to fall from heaven before the day of battle kept him cautious.

44

Jovian, child of Varronianus, his father, an inhabitant of the land of [172] Singido in the province Pannonia, ruled eight months. 2. His father, when he had lost many children, was commanded in a dream to call Jovian him who, with his wife's time to give birth now at hand, was going to be born. 3. He was extraordinary in body, pleasant in spirit, studious of literature. 4. Hastening from Persia to Constantinople in the middle of a harsh winter, he died suddenly from repletion of the stomach, made more grievous by the plaster of a new building, in about his fortieth year.

45

Valentinian ruled ten years less ten days. 2. His father, Gratianus, sprung from modest stock near Cibalis, was called Funarius ["Trace-horse"] because five soldiers were unable to wrest a slave-market rope from him while he was carrying it. 3. Admitted into the army on the basis of this merit, he rose all the way to the power of the praetorian prefecture; on account of his favor among the soldiers, imperium was offered to a resistant Valentinian. 4. He admitted Valens, his own brother, into imperium as a partner to himself and, at length, at the behest of his mother-in-law and wife, created as Augustus Gratian, his son, who was not yet fully mature. 5. Valentinian was seemly in countenance, clever in character, serious in mind, most cultivated in conversation, although a man of few words, stern, vehement, tainted by faults, and most of all that of greed, of which he was a keen lover, and, in these things which I shall mention, very close to Hadrian: he was a most elegant painter, had a most powerful memory, reflected upon new weapons, fashioned images by means of wax or clay, made prudent use of places, times, and conversation; and so, in order to conclude briefly, if it had been permitted that he, who had entrusted himself as if to men most reliable and most prudent, had lacked men inimical to him, or that he had employed praiseworthy and erudite advisors, without doubt, he would have shone forth, a perfect princeps. [173] 7. In his time, Firmus, usurping rule in Mauretania, was destroyed. 8. Valentinian, responding at Bergentio to a legation of Quadi, expired as the result of a hemorrhage, his voice lost, his senses intact, in the fifty-fifth year of age. 9. Many, indeed, said that this had happened because of overeating and satiety. 10. And so,

with him dead, Valentinianus, now in his fourth year, with Equitius as promoter and Merobaudes, was produced from nearby, where he had been with his mother, and made imperator.

46

Valens, in company with his brother Valentinian, about whom we have spoken, ruled thirteen years, five months. 2. This Valens, when a lamentable war with the Goths was entered into, was carried, wounded by arrows, to a most humble dwelling; there, with Goths arriving and a fire set underneath, he was consumed by the blaze. 3. In him, these things demanded approbation: he was a fine advocate for owners of property; he seldom shifted judges; he was loyal to friends; he became angry without injury or danger to anyone; he was quite cautious, to be sure. 4. In his times, Procopius, usurping a tyranny, was destroyed.

47

Gratian, a native of Sirmium, ruled with his father, Valentinian, eight years, eighty-five days; with his uncle and brother, three years; with the same brother and Theodosius, four; and with Arcadius added to all these, six months. 2. At Argentaria, a city in Gallia, he killed thirty thousand Alamanni in battle. 3. And when he had recognized that extreme danger threatened the Roman name as a result of the Goths and Taifali and also, more terrible than total annihilation, the Huns and Alans controlling Thrace and Dacia as though foreign lands, to the applause of all, he committed a third of the imperium to Theodosius, a year under thirty, who was summoned from Hispania. 4. Moreover, this Gratian was not of modest learning in literature: he composed [174] poetry; he spoke elegantly; he explicated debates in the fashion of rhetors; both night and day he did nothing but practice archery, and he thought that to hit the mark was a thing of supreme pleasure and divine skill. 5. He was sparing of food and sleep, and a conqueror of wine and sexual desire; and he would have been fitted with all good qualities, if he had attended to comprehending the science of ruling the state, from which he was almost a stranger not only by inclination but also by practice. 6. For he aroused the hatred of the troops against himself when he neglected the army and preferred to the venerable Roman soldier a few from the Alans whom he had arrogated to himself by an immense payment of gold, and with the retinue of barbarians he had almost even begun to have friendship * [suspected lacuna] to the degree that he sometimes made a journey in the same attire. 7. At this time, when Maximus had seized a tyranny in Britain and had crossed over into Gallia, he was received by legions hostile to Gratian, put Gratian to flight, and, without delay, killed him. He lived XXIX years.

48

Theodosius, whose father was Honorius and whose mother was Thermantia, tracing his origin from the princeps Trajan, was made imperator by Gratian Augustus at Sirmium and reigned seventeen years. 2. They say that his parents, having been advised in a dream, bestowed upon him a name that in Latin we understand to mean "Given by God." 3. Also, with regard to this oracle, it was divulged in Asia that the name of the man who would succeed Valens would begin with the Greek letters Y and E and O and D. 4. Through the close relationship of the beginning of his name, a Theodorus was deceived and, when he presumed that the throne ought to be his, paid the penalties of wicked desire. 5. Theodosius, moreover, was an expander and distinguished defender of the state. For in diverse battles he defeated the Huns and Goths who had devastated it under Valens. Also, when petitioned by the Persians, he concluded a peace. 6. In addition, at Aquileia he killed Maximus the tyrant, who had murdered Gratian and had taken control of Gallia, [175] and executed his son Victor, who had been made Augustus while still an infant. 7. He also conquered Eugenius the tyrant and Arbogastes, killing ten thousand of their troops. For after he destroyed Valentinianus at Vienna, relying on Arbogastes' might, he had usurped control; but he soon lost imperium, along with his life.

8. Furthermore, many writings of the ancients and pictures inform us that Theodosius resembled Trajan in his manners and physique: thus, his stature was eminent, his limbs the same, likewise his hair and his mouth, except

that his legs were somewhat weak for marching and his eyes were not as glowing (I am not sure whether he was as kind, or had as much of a beard, or walked with so dignified a gait). 9. But his intellect was certainly similar, to such a degree that there is nothing able to be said which does not seem to be transferred to that man from books. He was merciful, compassionate, open, thinking to distinguish himself from others by dress alone; he was respectful toward all men, but more profusely toward the good; he prized simple characters equally, accomplished but harmless he admired; he bestowed great things with great spirit; he loved to reward citizens or those whom he knew through private companionship with honors, wealth, and other favors; he had especially esteemed the services of those toward himself and his father in hopeless adversity. 10. Nevertheless, he so detested those things by which Trajan was bespattered -- intoxication, to be sure, and desire of the triumph -- that he did not initiate wars, but found them in existence, and forbade by law lascivious occupations and that female lutists be employed in revelries, attributing so much to propriety and continence that he barred marriages of first cousins just as if they were those of sisters. 11. If we should compare him to the exceedingly polished, he was moderately learned; he was obviously intelligent and very keen with regard to becoming acquainted with the deeds of our ancestors. 12. From these he never ceased to censure the acts of which he read that were haughty, cruel, and inimical to liberty, as Cinna, Marius, [176] and Sulla, and everyone holding dominatio, but especially the treacherous and ungrateful. 13. He was, of course, enraged by unbecoming acts, but was quickly placated, because of which harsh measures were sometimes mollified as the result of a slight delay. 14. And he possessed by nature what Augustus possessed from a teacher of philosophy. 15. He it was who, when he had seen that he was easily disturbed, advised him, lest he order something harsh, to recite by memory the twenty-four Greek letters when he became angry, so that passion, which is momentary, would, with the mind turned to something else, lessen with the interposition of a little time.

16. What is of rare virtue, he was doubtless better after his regal power increased with the years, and better by far after his victory in civil war. 17. For he was very solicitous both to attend to the care of the grain supply and to return to many from his own the great mass of gold and silver borne off and expended by the tyrant, while the benign of the principes were, in fact, almost accustomed to concede denuded farms and devastated estates. 18. Now it is those less important and, as is said, intrapalace matters, which, indeed, because they are secret, greatly attract to themselves the eyes and ears of men of inquisitive nature: he nurtured his paternal uncle like a parent; he held the children of his deceased brother and sister as his own, having embraced cognates and affines in the spirit of a parent; he presented elegant and delightful, nevertheless inexpensive, entertainment; he mixed his conversations according to persons, his endeavors according to their ranks, light speech with weighty; he was a pleasing father, an agreeable husband. 19. He exercised neither for the purpose of pleasure nor stamina; when there was leisure, he restored his spirit by means of long walks and he controlled his health through moderation of eating; and so he departed in peace at Mediolanum, in the course of his fiftieth year in mortal affairs, bequeathing to his two sons, that is, to Arcadius and Honorius, two states quiescent. 20. In the same year, his body was borne to Constantinople and interred.

End